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Communist Propaganda League, Chicago

The Communist Propaganda League...

[Chicago]

[1919?]

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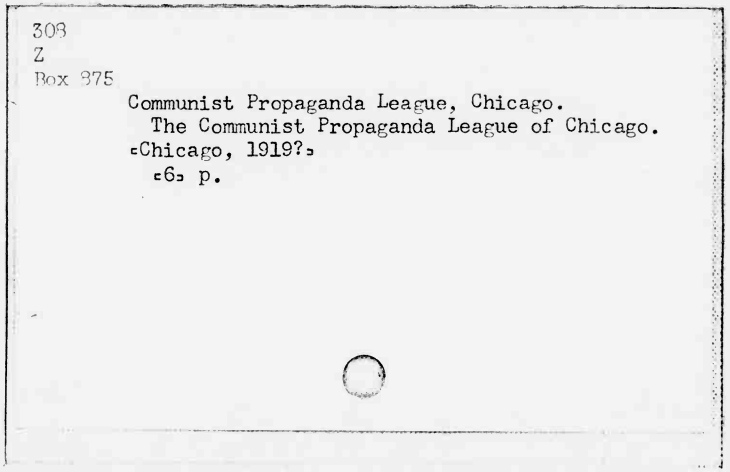

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THE COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA LEAGUE OF CHICAGO

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came into existence on November 7th, 1918, first anniversary of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic and the very day of the German Revolution.

Box 875

A group of Socialist party officials and active party members came together for consultation as to ways and means for giving the American Socialist movement a revolutionary character in harmony with all the significance of November 7th, the most glorious date in all history. At the hour of that little meeting bedlam reigned in the streets of Chicago by premature celebration of peace. The calling of this meeting during the mass tumult of November 7th is prophetic of the revolutionary vision which brought these comrades together. On that day the seething proletariat ruled Chicago by sheer force of numbers. One thing alone was needed to give this mass expression identity with the proletarian uprisings of Europe—one thing: the revolutionary idea!

THE COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA LEAGUE is an organization for the propagation of the revolutionary idea. The civilization of tomorrow is with unorganized masses who greeted the news of peace and revolution in Germany with what may safely be described as the greatest spontaneous expression of mass sentiment ever witnessed in America. To give direction and inspiration to the ad-

vancing and irresistible army of the proletariat is the mission to which this League is dedicated.

PROGRAM

We speak as members of the Socialist Party to other Socialists, primarily in the interests of the party itself, fundamentally in the interest of a truly revolutionary proletarian movement in the United States.

Those who have organized this League, in common with like-minded Socialists throughout the country, are imbued with the thought that the Socialist Party, as it presently functions, falls short of its possibilities in giving leadership and unity to the revolutionary proletarian elements in the United States.

There are certain well-defined lines of criticism of Socialist Party tactics and principles which have long been familiar to all thoughtful American Socialists: that the party proceeds on a too narrow understanding of political action for a party of revolution; that its programs and platforms have been reformist and petty bourgeois in character, instead of being definitely directed toward the goal of social revolution; that the party has failed to achieve unity with the revolutionary movement on the industrial field; that the party organization of itself is too cumbersome for quick response to new situations and opportunities for propaganda; that the stand against proletarian participation in imperialistic wars has not gone the full length of its own logic; that there has been compromising reservation in accepting the international leadership of the Bolsheviki of Russia; and, generally, that the modes of socialist functioning have not taken sufficiently into account the mass action of the proletariat which alone can bring revolution, but instead there has been blind reliance on balloting and pure parliamentarism as the weapons of revolution—a reliance which the experience of the past two years makes particularly empty.

Converting these different criticisms into affirmative propositions, we present the following program as the immediate basis of our activities:

1. Alliance and cooperation only with revolutionary socialist and labor elements in international affairs, such as the Communist Party (Bolsheviki) of Russia.

2. Socialist propaganda only on the basis of the revolutionary class struggle; a Socialist movement built only on revolutionary proletarian adherents. An end of petty bourgeois reformism as the basis of the Socialist Party activity.

3. Party policies and platforms free from hypocrisies and "planks" to catch votes; platforms only as statements of revolutionary aims.

4. Furtherance of such changes in political forms as are in line with the needs of proletarian-controlled industry, not of political changes based on bourgeois "democracy".

5. Identification of the Socialist Party with class-conscious industrial unionism.

6. Unity of all kinds of proletarian action and protest forming part of the revolutionary class struggle. Poiltical action to include political strikes and demonstrations, and to be in cooperation with industrial mass action.

7. No compromising with any groups not inherently committed to the revolutionary class struggle, such as Labor parties, People's Council, Non-partisan Leagues, Municipal Ownership Leagues, and the like.

8. The proletariat to be organized to oppose all wars of imperialism, though declared for "defense of country" or for "democracy", and to carry this opposition to the extent of refusal of service under conscription, and to general strikes. The workers to engage only in wars of proletarian revolution and in wars to repel attacks against proletarian governments.

9. A sense of realism as to the limited possibilities of the ballot as a weapon of revolution, or fights for 'justice' in capitalist courts, and dependence primarily on mass power and mass action of the proletariat.

10. Centralized party organization, corresponding to the highly centralized imperialist control to be overthrown.

    a. Organization for quick action and immediate response to new situations by having a National Executive Committee composed of paid party officials and propagandists with offices in the National Headquarters.

    b. Definite and easy control by the party membership of all party officials.

    c. Control by the party organization of all Socialists elected to public office.

    d. Control by the party membership, through the regular executive committees, of all official party publications; not by independent special committees or trustees.

    e. Establishment of a Central Lecture Bureau, and of a Press and Information Bureau.

    f. Standardization of party platforms, propaganda, dues, and methods of organization.

(NOTE: The members of the Executive Committee of the Chicago Communist Propaganda League are Robert H. Howe, Adolph Dreifuss, Alexander Stoklitsky, S. A. Koppnagle, and William Bross Lloyd. The Secretary is Isaac Edw. Ferguson, with present headquarters at Room 422, 803 W. Madison St., Chicago. Only members of the Socialist Party are eligible for participating membership in the Communist Propaganda League. Dues for 1919, $1.00.)

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